

Edwards Secures Funds for New McLennan County National Guard Facility

2011 Bill Continues Historic Commitment to Veterans, Troops & Military Families

(Washington, DC)— U.S. Representative Chet Edwards announced that he has secured \$5 million in the fiscal year 2011 Military Construction & Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill for a new headquarters in McLennan County for the Army National Guard's 143rd Airborne Infantry Battalion. The facility would make McLennan County the home to the only Airborne Infantry Battalion in the nation. The bill was approved unanimously Wednesday by the House Military Construction & Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee, which Edwards chairs.

Specifically, the funding secured by Edwards will go toward the planning and design of a new facility for the 143rd, which consists of 686 personnel. A Special Forces Company will also be stationed at the new headquarters. The Texas Army National Guard is currently considering locations in McGregor and Waco area for the new facility, which will create over 20 permanent local jobs.

Congressman Edwards said, *"When the National Guard approached me about locating a new battalion in McLennan County, I was thrilled to work with them and local leaders to help make that a reality. With hundreds of troops coming to McLennan County to train on the weekends, a new National Guard headquarters will create jobs and boost economic development in Central Texas. Most importantly, a new National Guard headquarters in McLennan County will play a vital role in supporting our forces in Afghanistan and Iraq while protecting our communities here at home."*

Major General Jose Mayorga, Adjutant General of Texas said, *“The Texas Army National Guard is excited to develop a new home for our Airborne Infantry Battalion. Thanks to the support of Chairman Edwards, we will be able to establish a first class facility in Central Texas which will also serve to support emergency response operations.”*

Overall, the 2011 Military Construction & Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill totals \$77.3 billion in discretionary spending for 2011 to serve America’s service men and women and veterans. In addition, the bill continues last year’s first ever two-year advance appropriations for three VA medical accounts by including \$50.6 billion for 2012, the highest priority of major national veterans’ groups.

With passage of the 2011 bill, Edwards’ subcommittee will have provided a 70 percent increase in funding for veterans health care and benefits since January 2007 including 2-year advanced appropriations to ensure dependable funding of veterans health care, over 10,000 new claims processors to reduce VA case backlogs, 3,389 doctors and 14,316 nurses, 145 community-based outpatient clinics, and 92 new vet centers, and more than 47,000 additional Veterans Health Administration employees.

Edwards continued, *“I am proud of the bipartisan work of this subcommittee to honor our nation’s veterans, troops, and military families. This bill continues our historic commitment to America’s veterans and military families, and sends a clear message that we deeply respect their service and sacrifice.”*

